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KING FOR A DAY

Story by Geoff Meyer images by Juan Pablo Acevedo

Team Great Britain rider Max Anstie is really finding his mojo. The Rockstar Energy Husqvarna rider put on a masterclass at the Monster Energy Motocross of Nations, going 1-1 and helping his country get onto the podium in the first time in 20 years. But there is more to this version of Max Anstie than we have ever seen. Having raced side by side with Jeffrey Herlings and Ken Roczen as a young boy, everyone has been waiting for this Max Anstie to show up, and it seems with a lot of hard work from himself and his team, he has found that extra little bit of himself to become more than just a good GP rider. What 2018 brings is something we all look forward to with the always friendly and excited 24 year old.





No British rider has won a GP in the premier class since Kurt Nicoll in 1997, also 20 years ago, and going by the form of Anstie in the last month, he might be able to tick that one off the list in 2018. Lets hope so.

We caught up with him after his MXoN brilliance, and not surprisingly, he was a little excited and ready to party.

Motocross Illustrated: Max, it seems like you have found another level. Not just here at the MXoN, but in the last month. Maybe you are a lot closer to getting back to the level of Herlings and Roczen?

Anstie: To be honest, the team, it's just work. At the start of the season we had had a good off-season, but I still wasn't sure where I was meant to be. I just stuck to the plan from the team, every single day. What Antti and Tommy and the guys there have given me. Every single day, just sticking to the plan. Training becomes racing and racing becomes training. We have just been able to click of laps and motos, and hard work, and I am not scared to work. That is what has made it easy. It didn't feel difficult when I was riding, and I don't want to sound cocky, but when I was riding it came so easy. It wasn't like I was riding amazing, I was just hitting my lines and doing my thing. I didn't care who was behind me, just clicking my laps off.

Motocross Illustrated: Well done, mate, really good to see you do this.

Anstie: It's been unbelievable. I felt this last part of the season, I have been, with my team, with the Rockstar Energy Husqvarna team, I knew these last few GPs I got on the box and I knew I would be good for Matterley. The crowd was so loud, I had just too much time to think. I better keep going, not DNF. I had a good race going. I looked at this like it was GP number 20, and it hasn't sunk in yet, I mean the crowd was amazing and the family is here. I feel like I am in this zone, like I am down the road at my track. I felt like that all day. I just tried to focus with the emotion and I don't know yet. Seeing all those fans out there, it's a once in a life-time thing. I don't think we will do the Nations again in England.

Motocross Illustrated: And the fans, they must have given you so much energy?

Anstie: The fans made it a little more nerve racking and the announcer. I could hear him all the time. There were a few turns where I could hear him really easy. He said at one point, "all eyes on Anstie, if Team GB get the podium." I was like oh my god, I need to win, it





must be by one point or something. I felt I needed to win for us to get on the podium. Special event and a special feeling.

Motocross Illustrated: How much did the crowd help though, it must have been important?

Anstie: It was amazing, but the main thing that helped (with the crowd) was the lappers. The crowd was so load, I think the lappers just got out of the way because they thought somebody was coming. Everyone was just moving out of my way, which was great. The blue flags were good, but in some cases people were not paying attention. Some of the guys are not normal GP guys. So, the crowd was so unreal that they just moved out of the way. If it did anything, it made me nervous at the end of the first one. I was thinking too much. Like, oh my god, I am about to win the Nations now. The second moto, I had Romain there and then Jeffrey there and I didn't have time to think. I literally looked up and it was two laps to go. So, the second moto was pretty easy.

Motocross Illustrated: Jeffrey caught you quickly in that second one. Like you said, you looked really calm. We all know what Jeffrey can do, so you must have expected an attack?

Anstie: When I crashed, I was a little in front of Romain, and then I crashed again and had to catch him and I knew Jeffrey was only three or seconds behind. I was trying to pass Romain, then Jeffrey caught up and then some of the lappers messed me up, and I knew those last couple of laps Jeffrey would be strong. Just the way the lappers were in the way and if Jeffrey got a good line, he would take another second out of me. So, I wasn't too worried, I was hitting my lines and knew where I was going, I actually felt ok.

Motocross Illustrated: What do you do tonight, the beer tent at the track, or the afterparty?

Anstie: I have no idea. I haven't had a drink in a long time, and I have been training and working hard for a long time, so I think I am going to get on it tonight.

Motocross Illustrated: Last question. How much will this help for 2018?

Anstie: It's great. I mean the team is great, and I know we will continue working and progressing. I know the Nations is one race and people have won, and it doesn't mean anything for next year. I will have a week off and start testing for next year. I wouldn't mind another of these gold plates (his MXGP overall plate), I am hoping I can get one as a world champion, in the next few years I want to get a world championship gold plate





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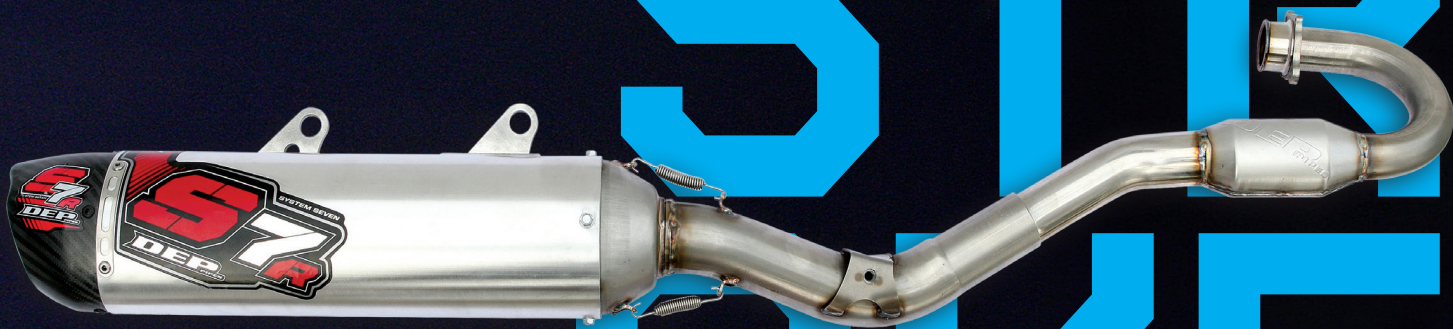
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1962 BELGIUM	1962 SWEDEN	1974 SWEDEN
1963 GREAT BRITAIN	1963 GREAT BRITAIN	1975 CZECHOSLOVAKIA
1964 GREAT BRITAIN	1964 GREAT BRITAIN	1976 BELGIUM
1965 GREAT BRITAIN	1965 GREAT BRITAIN	1977 BELGIUM
1966 GREAT BRITAIN	1966 GREAT BRITAIN	1978 USSR
1967 GREAT BRITAIN	1967 GREAT BRITAIN	1979 BELGIUM
1968 USSR	1968 USSR	1980 BELGIUM
1969 GREAT BRITAIN	1969 BELGIUM	1981 USA
1970 GREAT BRITAIN	1970 SWEDEN	1982 USA
1971 GREAT BRITAIN	1971 SWEDEN	1983 USA
1972 GREAT BRITAIN	1972 BELGIUM	1984 USA

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World Number One

Story by Geoff Meyer images by Ray Archer and Juan Pablo Acevedo

Team France continued their domination of the Monster Energy Motocross of Nations, and as always it was Romain Febvre and Gautier Paulin who held strong for the team, but also World Enduro rider Christophe Charlier surprised everyone. “I had two solid races and two good starts,” Febvre said. “The new bike is just amazing. We had been working for a few weeks but it already felt better. In the first race I was battling with Jeffrey and when he crashed I had to take off my goggles because I couldn’t see so well. With the lapped riders it was really difficult so I took a safe second. In the second race I felt I couldn’t continue again like this so stopped quickly for goggles but anyway we are so happy to have won for the fourth time. People had doubts about Christophe on social media but he won both the ISDE and the Nations and that’s quite amazing.”







For Paulin it was his fourth victory, joining Jeff Smith from Team Great Britain in the 1960s and Jeff Ward from the Team USA dream teams of the 1980s and 90s as the only riders to have won it four years running.

“Winning the Nations is a crazy feeling that never gets old,” Paulin said. “This is such a special event with fans and spectators travelling from all parts of the world to see us race. I really want to thank my teammates Christophe Charlier and Romain Febvre. They did a great job and the overall win belongs to all three of us. The atmosphere this year has been amazing. As for me, it feels great to be able to get a fourth consecutive win with the team. I did my best to secure two good results in the final races, and I made it happen. I loved every moment of this year’s Motocross of Nations.”

As for Charlier, his results really made sure that the French would walk away with the Chamberlain Trophy.

“I’m over the moon with this victory,” Charlier said. “Especially for me focusing all my efforts this season into the EnduroGP World Championship, it’s been a crazy experience coming back to the pinnacle of motocross competition. The Nations is always a huge event and this season it seemed that it was even more spectacular. As for me, I spent the last couple of weeks training on the FC 250 machine and it all worked out pretty well here in the UK. I got 14th in the first race and then managed to improve to sixth in race two. It’s been a crazy journey and it feels amazing to have now won the ISDE and the Nations during the same season.”

Now it will be onto America in 2018 and the Redbud Motocross of Nations. Can the French win it again?







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Can They Come Back?


Story by Geoff Meyer images by Juan Pablo Acevedo

Ricky Carmichael was always the leader when it came to the Motocross of Nations. A man who helped bring Team USA back to the Nations after they missed the 2001, 2002 and 2003 events. His debut in 1998 was a tough one as the pouring rain at the Foxhills facility caused all riders (apart from Stefan Everts) to struggle. But his team victories in 2000, 2005 and 2007 are some of the most dominating the MXoN have ever seen. Carmichael would love to be involved in helping Team USA return to their dominant days, and he is open in working with the riders to try and motivate them to victory.









"It would be an honour to work with the team," Carmichael said. "I haven't spoken to anyone. I am always up for helping, but I have never been invited. Roger (DeCoster) keeps it locked up pretty tight for the most part, but I am always here to help, and I am always willing to help the riders, but I haven't seen an invite."

The rider known as the GOAT in America also feels that Team USA have the riders to win the event, but it is not always lady luck on their side.

"I think we have had good enough teams to contend with the win. Last year sucked with Jason Anderson, and he was lucky he came back from that. I think the important thing to remember, we have had teams capable of winning, but we have finished where we were capable of finishing."

Not racing for Team USA is something that burnt Carmichael whenever he wasn't picked. And surprisingly, there were years he didn't get the call from Roger DeCoster.

"I remember the year I didn't get picked, in 1997, I wasn't picked and they took Steve Lamson, and I was bummed. My goal was to win a supercross and a motocross title, and race the Motocross of Nations."

As for riders from America not wanting to represent their nation, that is something Carmichael just doesn't understand. His desire to hold the American flag high was legendary and he feels it's time for the excuses to stop and riders to put their name in the hat for MXoN selection.

"That's the funny thing, I don't know what has changed from when I raced. We have the same

number of races, the top guys are getting paid a lot more, some of the top guys. So, I am trying to figure out what has changed. I am still trying to figure out what the hell has changed.”

As for the domination by European riders at the MXoN in recent years, Carmichael feels it's as much about the way the American riders look at motocross, as anything else.

“I enjoyed racing. I think what is happening is, the riders don't take as much pride in the motocross championships (in America), and they put more effort into supercross, with riding and training and I think that is why the gap now is so close between the American riders and the GP riders now. I think the American riders just maintain through motocross, but if you ask them what would they rather win, they will tell you supercross. Also, I feel like compared to my day, there are faster European guys now, while in my day, it was just Stefan. Now there is Herlings, Cairoli, Febvre, Gajser, the list goes on. It wasn't like that in my day. More guys now and I think the Americans don't work as hard in motocross and it makes it look like the European guys have gotten faster.”







Photo: R. Schedl

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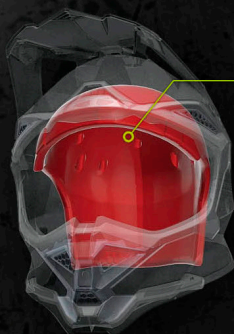
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Finally A Podium

Words Geoff Meyer imaes Ray Archer

The 2017 Monster Energy Motocross of Nations was always going to be tough for Tommy Searle. Having not raced the MX2 bike for a number of years the always reliable British rider. A problem in the opening moto, and a DNF really struck hard for the GP winner, but then a consistent 15th place in his final moto helped Team GB onto the podium. On the Friday, Searle felt confident that Team Great Britain would do well, and he likened it to the 1994 preparation of Team GB, the last time they won the event.











"I felt good coming in. I don't know what happened to the last guy who won the Motocross of Nations for Britain (joking about Paul Malin who is the Youthstream press conference announcer), he was riding a Yamaha 125. Obviously, the year Paul Malin won, it was similar this year, with team selection, and people have points that out. I felt good, and Dean and Max were riding better than ever. I felt good on the 250, Steve Dixon has a good 250 and I was really looking forward to racing this race this weekend.

As for his races. They didn't go to plan, with a mechanical issue and then a struggle through the pack to get his team on the podium.

"I was going well in the first race until I had to retire, and I felt I'd let the rest of the team down at first as this is a team contest and it put the pressure on the other guys. I knew I had to bring it home in my second ride but I had a bad start and got filled in with the mud as I came through the pack. I was very nervous and fifteenth is not good, but it was enough to help earn third place for the team."

All in all, Searle was just glad to go home with a podium finish, something that had eluded him on so many occasions in the past.

"A mixed day, that first race DNF, I was so disappointed, because I felt I had let the team down. In the second race. The track was difficult all weekend. I think if it was a sunny day, it would have been easier with vision. Most riders lost their goggles early on, but I think it was the same for everyone else."



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Photo: R. Schedl

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